Everything you need to know about Google's new CEO, Sundar Pichai

MADELINE STONE AND STEVEN TWEEDIE
AUG. 10, 2015, 10:25 PM

Google just announced some huge changes to its executive structure.

Larry Page will run a completely new company called Alphabet, a collection of Google companies including Life Sciences, which manufactures glucose-sensing contact lenses, and Calico, which focuses on longevity. Sergey Brin will serve as Alphabet's President.

Former Chrome and Android head Sundar Pichai will be Google's CEO.

Many are still unfamiliar with Google's new chief executive, who first joined Google in 2004 and eventually worked his way up to be Page's right-hand man.

Google's new CEO, Sundar Pichai.

Flickr/Maurizio Pesce

Originally from Tamil Nadu, one of India's 29 states, Pichai studied at the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, where he received a Bachelor of Technology.

He then received a M.S. from Stanford and obtained an MBA from Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. At Wharton, Pichai was honored as a Siebel Scholar and a Palmer Scholar.

Before his first job at Google, Pichai worked at Applied Materials as an engineer and then at McKinsey & Company in management consulting.

In 2004, Pichai joined Google as its vice president of product management, where he led the team working on Google's Chrome browser and operating system.

Pichai quickly began to receive more responsibility, however, taking on involvement with various Google search products including Firefox, Google Toolbar, Desktop Search, Gadgets, and Google Gears and Gadgets.

In September 2008, Pichai oversaw the successful launch of the Chrome web browser, and less than a

year later, the web-based Chrome operating system for netbooks and desktop computers.

Pichai added another Google division to his portfolio in 2012 after Google Apps head Dave Girouard departed to start his own company, Upstart.

A year later, Pichai was put in charge of Android after Android co-founder and CEO Andy Rubin stepped down in March 2013.

Throughout his time at Google, Pichai has developed a sterling reputation for being well-liked, leading Recode's Kara Swisher to call his recent promotion "a definitive case of nice guys finish first."

Former Google product manager Chris Beckmann spoke highly of Pichai in a recent Quora post, praising Pichai's ability to helm difficult projects while building a strong team.

"He recruited, mentored, and retained a great team," said Beckmann. "Sundar's team of product managers had a reputation as being among the best of the best, similar to the reputation of the software engineers within Search Quality."

Beckmann also mentioned that Pichai "avoided making enemies" in the midst of Google's workplace politics and "navigated those politics to make his team successful while inflicting the least possible damage on any other team."

Pichai demonstrated his team devotion while working under Marissa Mayer, who then was a key executive at Google. According to The Information's Amir Efrati, Pichai "used to wait for hours outside her office to make sure that she gave his team solid work-performance scores."

In addition to his team management skills, Efrati notes that Pichai has also been known to throw his weight around when necessary. At his year's Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, Pichai reportedly "told Samsung's mobile-products leader that Google was willing to 'walk away' from its enormous phone partnership with the company."

Pichai's impressive track record at Google caused him to be approached by Twitter to potentially lead Product at the social network, but Pichai ultimately declined. In addition to Twitter's interest, Pichai's name was also mentioned as a potential front-runner for the position of Microsoft CEO after Steve Ballmer announced his resignation in August 2013.

In October 2014, Google announced that Page would be stepping back to focus "on the bigger picture," according to Recode, and that Pichai would take on a larger role as a result.

Pichai took charge of Google's core products, including search, maps, research, Google+, Android, Chrome, infrastructure, commerce and ads, and Google Apps.

In a press release announcing Pichai's new post as CEO Monday, Page wrote:

> "He has really stepped up since October of last year, when he took on product and engineering responsibility for our internet businesses. Sergey and I have been super excited about his progress and dedication to the company. And it is clear to us and our board that it is time for Sundar to be CEO of Google. I feel very fortunate to have someone as talented as he is to run the slightly slimmed down Google and this frees up time for me to continue to scale our aspirations."